STATE OF THE PEOPLE

By STEVE HALE

A huge American flag is painted at the top of a cliff near Hailstone, Wasatch County.

It's an old Old Glory.

Midway merchant Guy Coleman says he rememered seeing that flag often when he was a boy. And Mr. Coleman is 70 now.

Not even Sam Lawry can say for sure how long that flag's been in the crags. It's located on land he owns.

Mr. Lawry's been living almost directly under the Stars and Stripes since about 1925. He's been alone most of that time.

When he answered the door at his little wooden home Friday, he was wearing blue-and-white striped overalls, blue shirt, long white beard and a tentative smile.

The teeth he showed are white, even and his own. His youthful eyes were clear and the color of summer skies on a fair day. His nose is a bit bent, but is one that adds strength to his face.

Despite his 73 years, Sam Lawry is a handsome man.

His face has a fierce, yet benign quality that reminds those who behold it of another face. It's a familiar face, too, but remembering just whose is difficult. . . .

Mr. Lawry tells the story of that flag in the rocks this way:

"Before my father and I bought this land, it was owned by Benny Norris. That was in the day when soldiers didn't ride in trucks all the time.

"One day some of them marched up and stopped on the road to rest. Mr. Norris pointed to that spot on the rock and asked them to paint the flag there. Three of them did.

"Later, it started to look dim. So my brother Will repainted it. I helped buy the paint.

"After that, a lady from Heber named Miss Isabelle Baum paid crews to repaint the flag. After she died, nobody looked after it for a while.

"Then the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Heber took an interest in it, and they've been doing it over every two or three years since then. Sure looks fine when they first do it."

The light in Mr. Lawry's eyes as he told that story once more jogged the memory about the other face that looks like his.

Those striped trousers, the eyes, that flag, the beard—and yes, even Mr. Lawry's name.

Suddenly, it came.

The man who lives under that flag creates a striking impression of the face that appeared on a famous recruiting poster—Uncle Sam's.

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